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Migration and Social Transformation: Myths, theories and politics

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Abstract: This chapter seeks to unpack the many 'migration myths' which float around in official discourse, feeding prejudice and misinformation. It takes migration to be part of a broader process of social transformation and not something self-contained. It foregrounds the mobility of labour as an integral element of the capitalist mode of production in the era of globalization. It also places in a central position the uneven nature of capitalist development on a global scale, that is only superficially captured by the mainstream distinction between 'sender' and 'receiving' countries. Finally, it emphasises the active role that migrant workers play as against the common picture of them as always victims.

Keywords: Migration; Social Transformation; Capitalism; Uneven Development; Labour Movement.

Migración y transformación social: mitos, teorías y dimensiones políticas

Resumen: Esta investigación busca desentrañar los numerosos mitos sobre la migración que circulan en el discurso oficial, alimentando prejuicios y desinformación. Considera que la migración parte de un proceso más amplio de transformación social y no como algo aislado. Pone en primer plano la movilidad laboral como un elemento integral del modo de producción capitalista en la era de la globalización. También sitúa en un lugar central la naturaleza desigual del desarrollo capitalista a escala global, que solo se capta superficialmente en la distinción dominante entre países emisores y receptores. Finalmente, enfatiza el papel activo que desempeñan los trabajadores migrantes, frente a la imagen común de que siempre son víctimas.

Palabras clave: Migración; Transformación Social; Capitalismo; Desarrollo Desigual; Movimiento Obrero.

International migration-including refugees and asylum seekers - has gone to the top of many political agendas, and yet we still see mainly *Migration Myths* with popular beliefs (and prejudices) being repeated uncritically. The first section below thus seeks to deconstruct some of those dominant myths. I then move on to a different, more theory-based, section on *Transformation Times* which argues that migration cannot be understood on its own, but must be seen as part of a broader, complex process of social transformation. I would emphasize the role of migration in terms of labour mobility as originally posited by Marx. Having thus situated migration beyond the surface manifestation expressed in current debates, I turn to what I call *Views from Below*. This is essentially a Gramscian perspective that centres the migrant view of the world, though it also places in a central position the uneven nature of capitalist development on a global scale, that is only superficially captured by the mainstream distinction between 'sender' and 'receiving' countries.

Migration Myths

Social analysis has always been cognisant of the difference between social phenomena and underlying theoretical explanation. That migration is deemed a 'social problem' by the dominant discourse - being often reduced to surface phenomena- will come as no surprise. We will outline below ten of the most common migration myths, taken (with acknowledgement) from Hein de Haas's monumental recent study of *How Migration Works* (de Haas, 2023). We will, however, not stop at a demystification exercise and use this process to take us into the domain of the underlying causes and systemic factors that create the issues highlighted. Surface level observations - for example in the public policy domain - cannot identify the root causes of the issues raised nor provide us with the tools for effective intervention and social transformation. So, while we start at the symptomatic level, we will then go on to articulate an integrated analysis of uneven development, power imbalances, and systemic inequalities that alone can explain the complex process of migration.

Following de Haas (2023) we start with two myths that dominate popular and policy debates around migration in the global North. The first and overarching theme is that 'migration is at an all- time high' (de Haas. 2023:15) and the second, inter-related theme is that 'borders are beyond control' (de Haas. 2023: 31). These are dominant tropes across the global North and serve to inflame popular views such as «Ireland is full» or 'stop the boats' in the UK. While globalization has, indeed, deepened integration and speeded up many travel routes, in reality international migration levels have remained both low and stable. Previous historical waves of international migrant flows were hi-

gher than present ones and we are certainly not going through a 'global displacement crisis' as some international organizations proclaim (see Cantat et al., 2023 on the notion of 'migration as crisis'). Nor are there any signs that borders are beyond control, with legal migration remaining stable, and irregular migration only emerging in the news because Northern countries have closed many regular immigration channels.

Further negative stereotypes in Northern policy and most particularly popular beliefs are that «immigrants steal jobs and drive down wages» (de Haas, 2023: 129) and that «immigration undermines the welfare state» (de Haas, 2023: 145). The notion that migrant workers 'steal' the jobs of native workers, and or drive down wages is an old one. There have been many econometric studies carried out on the impact of migrants on the labour market and almost all conclude that the impact is neutral and where it is negative it is not a major shift. That is not to say that those at the bottom of the labour market will not feel the impact of overseas workers prepared to work in poorer conditions than they are. As to the widespread notion that migrant labour is detrimental to the Northern welfare state that has for long been a source of stability and social integration, the research does not show this to be the case. The myth of the welfare migrant is also just a myth insofar as the vast majority of immigrants travel precisely to work and earn well.

In terms of the negative impact of migration there is a widespread myth that «immigrant integration has failed» (de Haas, 2023: 160) and that «public opinion has turned against immigration» (de Haas, 2023: 279). It is a common belief in the North that the integration of migrants has been a failure, rather they are seen as ghettoised communities locked into a spiral of disadvantage and social exclusion. Evidence from the US at any rate shows that the integration of current migrants- measured in terms of educational performance, etc - is as good as previous early 20th century migration flows. Discrimination in terms of job hiring persists, but the upward social mobility of migrants is well established. As to the perceived increased negative perception of migrants by most populations there are, indeed, bouts of xenophobia largely caused by government discourses about migration, but long-term studies show an increasing level of acceptance and even welcoming of migrant workers and their families.

In terms of the politics of immigration, there is a popular belief fomented by many governments, that «smuggling is the cause of illegal migration» (de Haas, 2023: 291) and that in terms of what must be done, many continue to believe that «border restrictions reduce immigration» (de Haas, 2023: 326). It is a common perception that «illegal» migration is caused by people smugglers or

trafficking gangs that lure potential migrants into desperate voyages. In reality, they are a product of the labour demand in the North and the fact that legal routes are increasingly closed off. So, stopping this «evil trade» will not stop migration flows. As to the notion that increased border restrictions between Mexico and the US and in the Mediterranean will reduce migration, that is simply not the case. More walls and fence lines have in practice increased the flow of migrants who find new ways to circumvent these obstacles, through other geographical regions or through «category jumping» from the labour to the family reunification channel.

Another final set of myths relate to the interface between migration and development. There is a widespread belief that «immigration lifts all boats» (de Haas, 2023:222) and that «development in poor countries will reduce migration» (de Haas, 2023: 78). Taking the latter point first it was common (especially on the left) to advocate 'development' in the global South as the best way to reduce migration. But even a cursory knowledge of developing countries should have taught these advocates that development - as in economic and social modernization - in fact increases the levels of migration. It is not the poorest of the poor who emigrate but those with considerable resources who can afford to do so. As to immigration lifting all boats that has never been the case. Northern employers are the main beneficiaries, Northern consumers also benefit, migrants can benefit, sender countries suffer a brain drain and the communities left behind are often denuded of human resources whatever the passing impact of remittances might be for some.

What becomes clear running through these foundational myths of the migration problematic is that migration studies lack an adequate theoretical lens to go beyond these surface phenomena. Critics may expose the flaws of superficial state led or popular views, but they do not offer a rounded theoretical alternative. This lack of social theory is admitted by Hein de Haas himself who says that «Migration theory has been at an impasse for several decades. The field of migration studies has remained a surprisingly under-theorised field of social enquiry» (de Haas, 2021: 25). That the simplistic push-pull theory of migration still holds sway in some domains is indicative of this theoretical under-development. More recent approaches - such as the aspirations-capabilities frame (de Haas, 2021)- have not sought to analyse the transformation of capitalism underlying migration, instead borrowing from another interdisciplinary, policy- oriented and ultimately eclectic field, namely development studies to which we will return below.

One recent theory of migration that does offer a theoretically grounded alternative is that of transnational migration studies (see Glick Schiller and

Faust, 2010). Today's transnational social question is seen to be the question of migration as once the labour question was primary. For Glick Schiller, even those analysts of migrants' transnational connections tend to focus on specific economic trajectories and «obscure the effects of the global restructuring of capital on the population, both migrant and non-migrant in specific localities» (Glick Schiller, 2010: 31). The lingering impact of methodological nationalism precludes migration studies from studying the transnational social and economic fields (of critical globalisation studies) but also the impact of locality in shaping the migration experience. To understand the power dynamics of migration, a more complex view of the world is required that is fully aware of the politics of scale from local to national to transnational and the way they structure the migrant (and non-migrant) experience.

While offering a useful corrective to «methodological nationalism» the transnational turn is not the solution I would argue. The globalisation lens of the 1990s tended to become over-inflated and in explaining «everything» it sometimes explained nothing. Transnationalism, in relation to migration and social movement studies, did not adequately theorise the changing terrain of the national (and local) simply assuming it had been superseded by the global. Michael Smith addressed the global turn and what seemed at times to be a celebration of hybridity, arguing that this serves «to erase the fact that no matter how much spatial mobility or border crossing may characterize transnational actors household, community and place-making practices, the actors are still classed, raced and gendered bodies in motion in specific historical contexts, within certain political formations and spaces» (Smith, 2001: 238). In brief, methodological transnationalism is in danger of erasing the concrete historical spatial and social contexts in which people migrate.

I am thus pushed towards a wider lens to analyse contemporary migration, inspired by the last works of Stephen Castles. There is a sense of theoretical regression in mainstream migration studies since his landmark studies in the 1990's. Ultimately, Castles seems to have moved 'beyond' migration studies in the sense that it could be seen as a self-contained field. His last arguments were very clear; he «argued that a general theory of migration is neither possible nor desirable» but that a «conceptual framework for migration studies should take social transformation as its central category» (Castles, 2008: 1). Whereas other migration experts were complaining that «the new ways of thinking [about migration] have not yet cohered into a single theory» (Castles, 2008: 2) Stephen Castles was subverting the whole notion that migration was a social phenomenon that could be studied in isolation. We now turn to what

this epistemological break meant in terms of developing a social transformation lens for the study of migration.

Transformation Times

For Stephen Castles, after surveying the migration question for many decades, the conclusion to be drawn was that it had to now be set in the context of social transformation if it was to be analysed rigorously. Migration studies had historically been conducted in research centres rather than academic departments, and often with a direct policy orientation and that, for him, meant it was somewhat isolated from wider theoretical debates. When the explosion of globalization studies occurred in the 1990s many of its proponents seemed to ignore migration or make only passing references to it. When I first met Stephen Castles around 2008, I was coming at migration studies from a labour movement perspective, having marginalised it in my own work hitherto. Stephen Castles and I came together around the importance of agency, something somewhat neglected in migration studies. And we found a common reference point in the framework of Karl Polanyi around globalisation and social transformation.

In a remarkable working paper, Stephen Castles and his research team make a detailed case for enlisting Karl Polanyi in the critical analysis of social transformation and international migration in the 21st century (Castles et al., 2011). they found «Polanyi's approach particularly meaningful because it provides a framework for understanding contemporary neo liberal globalisation emphasizes the interdependence of different societal sectors.... takes a non-teleological approach and avoids class essentialism» (Castles et al., 2011: 3). These were previously the reasons I had engaged with Polanyi from a global labour studies perspective from the mid-1990s onwards (Munck 2002). We seemed to be witnessing with globalisation another 'great transformation' every bit as far-reaching as the Industrial Revolution studied by Polanyi. He allowed us to avoid the mechanical Marxism that had dominated labour studies, and I focused on the 'double movement' of market expansion and societal reaction which was not reducible to the simple class reductionism of traditional Marxism.

From Polanyi as the general framework for analysing labour (and labour mobility) in the 21st Century I turned for further guidance to complexity theory to analyse labour flows which all agreed were not orderly or predictable. As Papastergiadis puts it «the turbulence of migration is evident, to only in the multiplicity of paths, but also in the unpredictability of the changes associated with these movements» (Papastergiadis, 200: 7). It is only a complexi-

ty lens that can allow us to unpack the different categories or forms of labour underneath the bare figures as reported by the IOM (International Office of Migration) and others. John Urry has added from a complexity perspective that the current patterns of global migration «need to be seen as a series of turbulent waves...with a hierarchy of eddies and vortices with globalism a virus that stimulates resistance, and the migration system a cascade moving away from any apparent state of equilibrium» (Urry, 2000: 62). This takes us way beyond the traditional, unilinear and mechanical push-pull view of migration and opens up a new perspective for the analysis of international migration.

To properly understand migration today, we also need to situate it within its historical context. The modern era, or to be precise the development of capitalism was inseparable from the era of colonialism and slavery. Migrants were people forced to move to other continents either through slavery or through different forms of bonded labour. Today, in the early 21st Century, we are witnessing, as Gambino and Sacchetto describe «various attempts to rediscipline migrant flows» (Gambino and Sacchetto, 2014: 90). Those migrants deemed a threat to the 'host' society face the most explicit and severe barriers. There is an ongoing insidious «regimentation of migrant flows through bureaucratic procedures» (ibid) not least through the formal and informal recruitment of workers in target countries. Migrant agency and autonomous strategies for movement and survival are constantly faced with a migration machinery that seeks to regiment their flows and move them through controllable channels. But the maelstrom of migration now, as in the past, is not so easily controlled in practice.

We need to understand global labour and its transnational flows as a manifestation of labour power as the leading commodity in the global circuit of capitalist exchange, over and above goods, finance and culture. The global division of labour has been constantly transformed and one witnesses today an escalation in the mobility of labour. As Nicholas De Genova puts it «as an operative, indeed decisive aspect of capital accumulation, labour-power never ceases to pertain to real flesh - and - blood working people. The accelerated mobility of labour power, therefore, is inseparable from the migration of actual human beings» (De Genova, 2012: 144). Thus, we can understand how migration is part of the «labour question» and not a separate self-contained process. From a critical political economy perspective, we must place migration as a salient aspect of labour flexibility which required, for Marx, the removal of any «legal or extra-economic impediment to its freedom of movement» (Marx, 1976: 1.013).

Going 'deeper' into the nature of the global order and seeking structural explanations for the superficial (and inaccurate) myths we saw in the section above I would start with the mobility of labour as an integral element of the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of labour and requires labour mobility to meet its requirements as it expands and restructures production. Capitalism as a mode of production is based on the fluidity or mobility of labour, thus requiring labour migration within and between countries. As Gaudemar puts it «the 'freedom' of the workers under capitalism would not exist without the mobility of labour, thus the mobility of labour is part of the specific determination of a capitalist economy» (Gaudemar, 195-196). Clearly then the international mobility of labour is one of the most important politically, socially and economically - forms of the capitalist mobility of labour. The spatial mobility of labour is but one facet of the flexibility and mobility of labour required by capitalism.

Karl Marx is not often thought of as a theorist of migration but in fact he engaged with this phenomenon in *Capital*, particularly in relation to Irish workers in Britain. The Great Irish Famine of 1846 as Marx said, «killed more than 1000 000 people, but it killed poor devils only» (Marx, 1976: 861). Many of the survivors were forced to emigrate to the colonial power, Britain, to work in the manufacturing sector then emerging. In Ireland «the revolution in agriculture has kept pace with emigration» (Marx, 1976: 862) which increased the size of the relative surplus population (despite the absolute depopulation). The impact of emigration in Ireland was severe, for Marx as «the gap caused by immigration limits not only the local demand for labour, but also the incomes of small shopkeepers, artisans and tradesmen in general» (Marx, 1976: 863). Marx even referred to what we now called remittances, referring to that part of the Irish population drawn to the United States rather than Britain. Thus «Emigration became one of the most lucrative branches of its [Ireland's] export trade» (Marx, 1976: 862). The systematic process «suck out of it every year more people than are replaced by birth» (Marx, 1976: 862).

Today, labour migration still plays a major role in terms of the regulation of the labour market. Clearly the economies of the North still depend critically on the availability of migrant labour. These flexible and mobile workers are vulnerable and many basic labour rights do not apply to them. As Bauder puts it «international migration is a regulatory labour market tool» (Bauder, 2006: 4) allowing employers to drive down wages and lower labour standards through the introduction of a «cheap and flexible» migrant labour force. The Northern labour market regulation thus benefits from the reduction of the overall wage but also from less onerous labour standards and the enhanced

flexibility of the labour force. So, not only are the labour markets of the global North prime drivers of international labour migration but also those migrant workers both shape and regulate the labour market.

While the political economy of migration is as yet under-developed, I do not believe the mainstream debate around 'migration and development' will take us forward. Nor will a simple call to move from South-North migration to South-South labour mobility (Crawley and Kofi Teye, (eds) 2024) while welcome will not provide is with a global understanding of migration. Those advocating for a positive relationship between migration and development have become fixated with the possible role of migrant remittances to countries of origin (see Castles and Wise, eds, 2008). There is much talk of win-win situations with both 'sender' and 'receiving' countries benefiting from the labour of the migrants directly and through remittances (the scale of which is vastly exaggerated). Then, on the other hand, the critics of migrant remittances focus on the mirror opposite, that is the 'brain drain' caused by the sender countries and the exploitation of the migrant workers themselves. In both cases, we are dealing with a quite simplistic view of development as a zero-sum game that does not recognize the complexity of global development and the contradictions of capital accumulation. In brief, 'development' is not a simple ingredient to simply 'add and stir' into migration debates.

We need to rethink 'development' critically if the term is to have any meaning at all for us (see Munck, 2021). As an area of study and policy intervention it has taken on a dominant character yet at the same time its meaning is quite vague in nature. It cannot be taken as a term with an agreed meaning that can simply be introduced into the migration debate. In its post-war, US-centric modality it endorses the win-win argument for migration presented above, but this line of interpretation has long since been superseded in the deconstruction of development debates. Its mirror opposite, the so-called post-development school stands its postulates on their head to argue that 'development' is detrimental to countries of the global South and the poor. It would, of course, see international migration as deepening that negative relationship. For myself, I would take development to mean the development of capitalism on a global scale with all its inherent contradictions that impact on labour mobility of course. That will feature in the next section below which seeks to articulate a view from below.

Views from below

It might seem odd to migration specialists that we start our review of subaltern perspectives with the figure of Antonio Gramsci. Yet Gramsci, from the

Italian south, the Mezzogiorno, was both a migrant and a precursor of post-colonialism, not just the theorist of politics in the affluent North. Gramsci as a spatial theorist can act as a hinge to explore a subaltern perspective migration. Gramsci's «philosophy of praxis» involved «not only the historicization but also the spatialisation of its analytical categories» (Jessop, 2006:27). In his analysis of the 'Southern Question' in a yet not fully defined Italy, Gramsci highlighted the enduring social and economic impact of uneven development but even referred to 'internal colonialism' a theme picked up by the Latin American theorists of dependency in the 1970's. The need for an alliance between the Northern industrial workers and Southern peasants was the foundation of Gramsci's project of securing hegemony in civil society.

Gramsci was picked up by Northern 'Eurocommunists' in the 1970's as a counterpoint to orthodox Leninism, no longer seen as adequate in advanced capitalist societies with a parliamentary democracy. Lenin was from the East (and south), while Gramsci was for the North. This neat (but inaccurate) schema was disrupted by Gramsci's reception and relevance in Latin America which was in a liminal situation between West and East as it were. More widely Gramsci has been taken up as a postcolonial theorist (see Srivastava and Bhattacharja, eds, 2012). This enterprise has set aside the opposition between tradition and modernity to replace it with the opposition between the subaltern and the hegemonic. This postcolonial Gramsci can illuminate the complexity and contradictions of contemporary migration with its emphasis on the historical, political and cultural struggles that frame it and shape it. Gramsci's own experience of the dialectic of colonization and emigrating in the Italian South is part of that heritage too.

There has recently been renewed interest in Gramscian perspectives on migration and civil society (see García Agustín and Jorgensen, eds, 2016). It finds in Gramsci a suitable cultural political economy frame to understand migration and to build a counter-hegemonic alliance. The Gramscian concept of civil society is a fertile ground to explore how these alliances are constructed. The movement of labour is an integral element in the making of a transnational labour movement for social transformation.

We turn now to the relationship between imperialism and migration that we propose as an alternative to the 'development and migration' frame in the migration studies literature. We need to return to the making of the global capitalist economy and how it is intrinsically based on uneven (yet combined) development and not the level playing field underpinning mainstream development studies. The uneven exchange between the global North and the

global South is seen to underpin the global flows of labour in the current era, as much as during the era of formal colonialism.

In developing a political economy of immigration, we need to start with the uneven development of capitalism since the colonial era and its impact on the mobility of labour. In the 1970's we saw the development of a theory of 'unequal exchange' - based on the lower wages in the South - which polarized the world-system into a centre and a periphery. After the era of direct colonial plunder which generated colonial super profits, it was the process of unequal exchange because the main mechanism through which the centre exploited the periphery. Against the mainstream Ricardian theory of 'comparative advantage' in terms of trade, the unequal exchange frame posits the notion that biased terms of trade and the undervaluation of labour and goods for the global South compared to the North, means that poorer countries are forced to export a much larger quantity of labour and resources than they import. The appropriation of resources from the global South to feed the global accumulation of capital and the workers it is forced to export are part and parcel of the same process.

More recently, Immanuel Ness (2023) has sought to systematise the way in which international migration is part of the processes of imperialism. While imperialism is usually seen as a transfer of value between nations through unequal exchange, it can also take the form of transfer of labour power. From slavery to Chinese and Indian contract workers to today's temporary and permanent migrants, imperialism has always sought to control the distribution of the world's labour force. As Ness puts it «in reality, labour migration is a modern way to extend the extraction of resources from countries in the developing world. It is thus an integral extension of economic imperialism» (Ness, 2023: 20). Outsourcing of production to low wage countries and insourcing of low-wage labour power are but two sides of the same coin. The difference in wages-referred to in the unequal exchange theory - is maintained by legal and illegal methods, and it is supported by racism and national chauvinism.

We need to recognize the position of 'sender' countries in terms of uneven development and the persistence of colonial patterns. Thus, a country like the Philippines (or Mexico) can emerge as a labour exporting country as others might export minerals or gains. It is clearly uneven development that lies at the root of a national decision to train and educate workers for export much as one might do for any other commodity. While this very particular export is located within what is ostensibly a national development strategy, its main beneficiaries are clearly the countries and employers of the North who have Filipino workers to staff their hospitals and so on. In the Philippines, colonial

era migration was replaced in the 1970s by a unique state sponsored system of labour export. The immediate incentive was the high demand for labour in the oil-rich Gulf societies. The 1974 Labour Code then established a government framework for the export of labour with the state effectively acting as a labour broker.

The Philippines governments made great efforts in the years since to promote the 'Filipino worker' brand globally, while ostensibly seeking to protect workers rights Robyn Magalit Rodriguez (2010) found that when President Arroyo visited the US in 2003 she said that «she is not merely president but the CEO» of a profitable «global enterprise» that generates revenues by successfully assembling together and exporting a much sought after commodity worldwide: «highly skilled well-educated English speakers» as well as «productive and efficient workers» (Rodrigues 2010:). A head of state is thus also a CEO and entrepreneur rationally maximising their country's competitive advantage. With a population of around 80 million people, the Philippines has over 8 million workers engaged overseas in both permanent and temporary capacities. This quite unique labour brokerage state (Mexico trails behind) highlights the links between imperialism, under-development and labour migration.

Returning to Gramsci as an unrecognized theorist of migration, we need to consider how migrants might fit into the struggle for hegemony. My own sense is that engaging with migrant workers can help bring international trade unions 'back to basics' (organization, mobilization, solidarity) as well as, of course, empowering migrant workers. Migrant workers have historically been used to break strikes and divide the working class by fomenting nativism and protectionism. Working class unity is not a given and there have always been divisions based on gender, age, ethnicity and national origin. It is part of the struggle for counter-hegemony in the pursuit of social transformation to overcome those tensions and create a sense of common purpose. In the famous 1920 Turin strikes-where Gramsci promoted unity with the Southern peasantry- trade unions were able to take on a progressive orientation and not just be a passive reflection of workers' rules in the capitalist production process.

To take but one example of how trade unions might engage with migrant workers I take a case from Ireland that I am familiar with, namely the Irish Ferries dispute of 2005. This company decided to sack all the Irish seafarers on its profitable cross- channel routes and replace them with Latvian contract workers on nearly half of their wages. This dispute soon became a tipping point for the whole Irish labour movement with a sense that this signalled a

full 'race to the bottom' in terms of labour standards. Unsurprisingly, in some mobilizations we saw placards proclaiming, «Irish jobs for Irish workers». Then an internal debate emerged in the largest union (SIPTU) which engaged the grassroots. Instead of turning against the 'strike breakers', the union instead moved towards organising the new workers and the flow of mass migration then beginning. Under the slogan of 'a worker is a worker is a worker' the Irish trade unions prevented a rogue employer from introducing division and, instead, began to build an (inter)national labour movement.

In the era of globalization, mass migration has become an essential element for the transformation and sustainability of capitalism as a social order. Although workers worldwide may be subject in a general way to the dictates of the new global capitalism, the migrant fractions of the working class must bear particularly onerous conditions. What seems clear that both labour market analysis and labour movement strategy needs to foreground migration. Labour migration is today a key element in the restructuring of global capitalism. Capital flight from the North to lower wage locations and international labour migration into the North are usually taken as separate processes with discrete logics but they are, in fact, part of the same dynamics of capital accumulation. Likewise, there is no rigid separation between labour movements in particular countries and transnational mobile workers. They are both part of a global working class in the making and the only social force that can seek to regulate the uncontrolled expansion of market forces.

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